



DARPA Announces Urban Challenge Finalists

11 Teams to Compete for Cash Prizes in Final Event of Robotic Ground Vehicle Competition

Television stations can downlink a satellite feed with same day coverage of the competition on Saturday, November 3, 12:00-12:30 PM PDT / 3:00-3:30 PM EDT, Galaxy 17 KU, transponder 4, uplink frequency 14080-H, downlink frequency 11780-V. [CORRECTED TIME]

November 1, 2007
Embargoed until 11:30 AM PDT / 2:30 PM EDT

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Victorville, Calif. – The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) today announced that 11 teams have been selected as finalists to compete in the DARPA Urban Challenge Event on November 3 at the former George Air Force Base in Victorville, Calif. The finalists (list attached) were selected from a field of 35 semi-finalists that participated in the National Qualification Event (NQE) October 26-31, and will compete for cash prizes worth \$2 million for first, \$1 million for second, and \$500,000 for third place.

“The teams that competed in the NQE were subjected to a series of rigorous tests to determine whether they were equipped to compete in the Urban Challenge Final Event,” said DARPA Director Dr. Tony Tether. “Finalists were selected based on performance in the NQE tests as measured by data collected and evaluated by trained scorers in the testing areas. The NQE tested the vehicles’ capability to merge into traffic, navigate four-way intersections, respond to blocked roads, pass on-coming cars on narrow roads, and keep up with traffic on two- and four-lane roads. In fact, the only major difference between the NQE and the Final Event is that other robotic vehicles will be part of the traffic in the Final Event.”

Teams competing in the Urban Challenge Event attempt to complete a complex 60-mile urban course with live traffic in less than six hours. The finalists will operate on the course roads with approximately 50 human-driven traffic vehicles. Speed is not the only factor in determining the winners, as vehicles must also meet the same standards required to pass the California DMV road test.

From the time each robotic vehicle leaves its starting chute and begins the course, it is entirely under control of its onboard mission computer – human observers may intervene only for purposes of safety. The entire field of robotic vehicles will be on the course at the same time, interacting with one another as vehicles in urban areas across America do each day. The vehicles will face driving challenges that include traffic circles, merges, four-way intersections, blocked roads, parking, passing slower moving vehicles, and merging safely with traffic on two- and four-lane roads.

“Vehicles competing in the Urban Challenge will have to think like human drivers and continually make split-second decisions to avoid moving vehicles, including robotic vehicles without drivers, and operate safely on the course,” added Urban Challenge Program Manager Dr. Norman Whitaker. “The urban setting adds considerable complexity to the challenge faced by the robotic vehicles, and replicates the environments where many of today’s military missions are conducted.”

The Urban Challenge Event is open to spectators, and is expected to attract thousands of attendees and hundreds of media from all over the world. The competition’s course and spectator areas at the former George Air Force Base are located at 18374 Phantom in Victorville, Calif. Grounds will be open to spectators starting at 6:00 AM PDT, and after an opening ceremony at 7:30 AM PDT, vehicles will begin to launch at 8:00 AM PDT.

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Robotics enthusiasts who are unable to make it to Victorville can get a first-hand look at the action in a professionally hosted webcast starting at 7:30 AM PDT / 10:30 AM EDT that will feature views of the competition from a variety of camera positions. The webcast will be accessible via two event websites – www.darpa.mil/grandchallenge and www.grandchallenge.org – that also will have regularly updated news, pictures and other content on the competition. **Television stations can downlink a satellite feed with same day coverage of the competition on Saturday, November 3, 12:00-12:30 PM PDT / 3:00-3:30 PM EDT, Galaxy 17 KU, transponder 4, uplink frequency 14080-H, downlink frequency 11780-V. [CORRECTED TIME]**

Qualification Breakdown

Qualified

Ben Franklin Racing Team, Philadelphia, PA
CarOLO, Caroline, NY
Honeywell/Intelligent Vehicle Solutions, Troy, MI
MIT, Cambridge, MA
Stanford Racing Team, Stanford, CA

Tartan Racing, Pittsburgh, PA
Team Cornell, Ithaca, NY
Victor Tango, Blacksburg, VA
Team AnnieWay, Palo Alto, CA
Team Oshkosh Truck, Oshkosh, WI
Team UCF, Orlando, FL

Did Not Qualify

Austin Robot Technology, Austin, TX
AvantGuardium, Fort Worth, TX
Axion Racing, Westlake Village, CA
Gator Nation, Gainesville, FL
Georgia Tech/SAIC Sting Racing, Atlanta, GA
Insight Racing, Cary, NC
Mojavaton, Grand Junction, CO
Ody-Era, Kokomo, IN
Princeton, Princeton, NJ
SciAutonics/Auburn Engineering, Thousand Oaks, CA
Team Berlin, Houston, TX
OSU-ACT, Columbus, OH

Team Autonomous Solutions, Petersboro, UT
Team CajunBot, Lafayette, LA
Team CalTech, Pasadena, CA
Team Case, Cleveland, OH
Team Cybernet, Ann Arbor, MI
Team Gray, Metairie, LA
Team Jefferson, Crozet, VA
Team Juggernaut, Sandy, UT
Team Urbanator, Littleton, CO
Team-LUX, Woodstock, MD
The Golem Group, Santa Monica, CA
University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT

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ABOUT DARPA

DARPA is the central research and development organization for the Department of Defense (DoD). The Agency manages and directs basic and applied research and development projects for DoD and pursues research and technology that provide dramatic advances in support of military missions.

ABOUT THE DARPA GRAND CHALLENGE

DARPA has sponsored two previous autonomous robotic ground vehicle competitions that were known as the DARPA Grand Challenge. The 2004 competition featured 15 vehicles attempting to complete a 142-mile desert course for a \$1 million cash prize, but none of the vehicles finished. In the 2005 Grand Challenge, four autonomous vehicles successfully completed a 132-mile desert route under the required 10-hour limit, and DARPA awarded a \$2 million prize to "Stanley" from Stanford University.